

For Immediate Release

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Washington, D.C.-- Today, Congressman Sires received an award for "Legislator of the Year" from the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT). ACT is a national organization whose purpose is to expand options for commuters. Each year, the Award is presented to two Members of Congress who demonstrate leadership in providing commuters with options. Congressman Sires introduced H.R. 3517, Commute LESS (Leveraging Employer Support and Successes), on July 31, 2009.

"My district in New Jersey has four of the top five most densely populated areas and every week I see the commute that many of my constituents take," said Congressman Sires. "In an effort to make commuting easier, I introduced the Commute LESS to make sure that there is better communication between transportation and employers when commuting options are discussed."

This legislation would give employers the tools and resources they need to provide their employees with real alternative forms of transportation such as transit, carpooling, telework, biking or walking. Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) would be required to include strategies for outreach and input from employers into the development of long-range

transportation plans. The Secretary of Transportation would be directed to create and expand employer investment in transportation and commuter benefit programs.

In an effort to impact environmental goals, H.R. 3517 would require states receiving funding coordinate with MPOs to establish statewide goals to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled. Additionally, this bill would reduce traffic during project construction by requiring federally funded projects to produce a mitigation plan if construction will reduce traffic flow for more than 120 days or exceed \$100 million.

“We are missing a vital link between employers and planning organizations when it comes to creating commuter options,” said Sires. “My legislation is based on a very successful model in Washington State and I am hopeful that this model will be a success throughout the country. H.R. 3517 will reduce congestion and improve the environment, give employers the tools and resources necessary to provide their employees better options, and make commuting easier for everyone.”

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